

Morale-booster for Wanderers in first trial

Wycombe Wanderers 6, Bedford 3

ONE LESSON to be learned from the first of Wycombe Wanderers' pre-season friendlies, against Bedford Town on Monday evening, was the obvious need to tighten up the defence.

Although the Wanderers' forwards moved sweetly as a cohesive unit, large gaps were left in the defence zone and the Bedford forwards were quick to capitalise on their freedom, especially in the first half.

Both teams placed the emphasis on attack, with the Wanderers pushing both their wing-halves up to lend a hand. This move created more space for the Bedford forwards to operate in and at half-time both teams had given creditable displays, with the score at 3-3.

Bedford, who have defeated second division Aston Villa in one of their warm-up games, concentrated their attacking efforts through Laurie Churchill and Ron Fogg.

HARROWING

The brilliant Churchill gave Charlie Gale, at left-back, a harrowing first 45 minutes, and in the opening stages all Bedford's attacks stemmed from this dangerous raider. However, in the second half, with a general tightening up in the defence, the Churchill — Fogg menace was eliminated.

For Wycombe, former player Dave Thomas, who has returned after a spell with Maidenhead, slotted in to the defence without any difficulty.

There is perhaps one draw-back with the return of Thomas. Both Barry Baker and Thomas are attacking wing-halves with a tendency to join the forwards. As a result the burden of covering the goal falls onto the shoulders of the three remaining defenders.

However, this is a weakness which can be quickly rectified with one of the players being given the instruction to curb to a

certain extent his natural attacking flair. In the main it was the "old-guard" which helped Wanderers to this morale-boosting win.

Keith Samuels looked particularly sharp in front of goal, while Tony Horseman, playing under the handicap of a slight thigh strain, moved quickly at centre-forward.

Dick Honeyman, who played in several games towards the end of last season, gave an impressive performance at outside-left for the opening half, but faded in the second stage. Another player who looked in fine form was goalkeeper John Maskell with his safe-handling of a greasy ball.

Goal-scorers: Wycombe — Samuels (19, 38, 85 minutes), Merriker (21 minutes), Horseman (90th minute), Skinn (own goal, 70th minute); Bedford — Cleary (23 minutes), Churchill (34 minutes), Fogg (36 minutes).